

NSC BRIEFING

20 March 1956

BACKGROUND--TUNISIA

I. Joint declaration of Tunisian independence and "interdependence" with France expected this date: probably will be patterned on 2 March Moroccan declaration. Suspends rather than abrogates, Treaty of Bardo which established protectorate in 1881.

A.

25X6

B. Declaration should sweeten current electoral struggle--  
60-man constituent assembly is being selected 25 March,  
will sit 8 April to write new Tunisian constitution.

II. Meanwhile, however, French troops in past week engaged two strong rebel groups, one in Gafsa area near Tunisian border, other in Gabes-Matmata-Madenine area, both locales for clandestine arms transit.

DOCUMENT NO. 16  
NO CHANGE IN CLASS  
X EXTENDING  
CLASS. CHANGED BY: 13 9 0  
NEXT REVIEW DATE:  
AUTH: H3 70-2  
DATE: 1-14-80 REVIEWER: 372044

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